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AUTHOR Pewewardy, Cornel D.
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ABSTRACT

Teachers in a multicultural society need to respect cultural differences, know the cultural resources their students bring to class, and be skilled at tapping into learners' cultural resources in the teaching-learning process. They must believe that all students are capable of learning, and they must implement an enriched curriculum for all students. It is important to avoid cultural stereotypes. Instead, teachers should respond to the individual and identify and explore his or her values. Enhancing the self-concept of American Indian learners is essential to their effective education. Helping learners recognize their heritage and giving them a sense of belonging as well as a sense of their uniqueness as American Indian are equally essential. For many teachers of American Indian children, major changes in behaviors, attitudes, and values are required. Non-native people must learn that tribes have a unique government-to-government relationship with the federal government and that American Indians have dual citizenship: tribal and U.S. citizenship. Culturally responsive teachers understand that the classroom is an ecology of language, culture, and thought. When evaluating American Indian learners, teachers should be aware of cultural differences. Conventional program evaluation standards often omit the nuances of ideographic and phenotypic attributes of people of color. Respect for the cultural differences of students begins by acknowledging that there is no one correct way to learn and that every child brings the culture of their own home and community to school. (Contains 55 references.) (TD)

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CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING FOR AMERICAN INDIAN LEARNERS

Cornel D. Pewewardy

Paper presented at the 1998 Kansas Institute on Effective Teaching Practices for Indian Education, Lawrence, KS (November 19).

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Culturally Responsive Teaching for American Indian[1] Learners

Introduction

What is culturally responsive teaching? Is it any different from other forms of teaching? Are American Indians so different from European Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans that a different teaching pedagogy is called for? Why aren't theories of teaching and learning equally applicable to all groups? If I need to change my teaching style with culturally diverse populations, do I need to do the same if I teach with a culturally diverse family? Why are so many American Indian parents so distrustful of non-Indian teachers? After all, aren't all teachers in the profession to help all learners? Can a non-Indian teacher teach an Indian learner effectively? What are some barriers to multicultural education? How can they be overcome? Can teacher preparation programs and inservice district specialist prepare monocultural teachers for a multicultural world? What are some characteristics and principles to guide culturally responsive teaching?

These are just a few of the important questions that this article attempts to address. It is critical that culturally responsive teaching not be separated from the broader sociopolitical environment. How teaching and learning styles are rooted in and reflect the dominant cultural values, beliefs, and biases of the larger society, how being culturally diverse in the United States has influenced their Native worldview, how traditional teaching may represent cultural oppression for American Indian learners, and how teachers must take steps to view the Native learner in a different way are the themes presented in this article.

What Is Culturally Responsive Teaching?

According to Smith (1991), culturally responsive teaching uses the child's culture to build a bridge to success in school achievement. Culturally responsive teaching places other cultures

alongside middle-class mainstream, macrocultures at the center of the classroom instruction paradigm. The bridge leads many places other than to academic achievement. For example, the bridge leads deeper in the study of one's own culture and/or to the study of other cultures. Ultimately it leads away from ethnocentrism toward a common national destiny. Most importantly, the teacher and the learner cross the bridge together, hand-in-hand; intertribally, interculturally, and transculturally. Geneva Gay (2000) contends that culturally responsive teaching is about teaching, and the teaching of concern is that which centers classroom instruction in multiethnic cultural frames of reference. Culturally responsive teaching recognizes the power of teaching while fully realizing that, without accompanying changes in all other aspects of schooling and society, the very best of teaching will not be able to accomplish the systemic reforms needed for ethnically diverse students to receive genuine educational equity and achieve excellence.

The two key words to keep in mind in this article are *culturally* and *responsive*, which seem naturally to go together when talking about a pluralistic society. Culturally responsive becomes especially pertinent to the behavior and thought processes of students increasingly reflected in the cultural diversity of the larger society. Being responsive, means to be aware of and capable of responding in educationally constructive ways in which cultural patterns influence the behavioral and mental ecology of the classroom (Bowers & Flinders, 1990). For teachers of American Indian learners being "culturally responsive," thus is meant to be all inclusive of the terms culturally “appropriate,” “congruent,” “relevant,” "sensitive," "aware," and “negotiated” of and capable of responding in educationally constructive ways in which cultural learning patterns, pathology, strengths perspective, family structure, multiple worldviews, tribal languages and Indian English influence the teaching and learning behavior and mental ecology

of the classroom.

A culturally responsive teacher is, therefore, the product of a culturally responsive teacher preparation program. Culturally responsive teachers are those who think multiculturally rather than monoculturally, who develop curricula that are multicultural rather than monocultural in content, who utilize methodologies that are congruent with cultural learning styles, and who understand that becoming a multicultural teacher is a developmental process without a known point of completion or a known point of arrival.

Differential Characteristics

The American Indian population is very diverse and composed of many regional and cultural subgroups and tribes. The U.S. government recognizes 177 different tribes, each with its own culture, varying degrees of traditionalism, acculturation, and educational levels. To better understand and appreciate cultural differences, educators must first embrace the concept that differences are just that, not good or bad, just different. This is especially true of teachers when trying to understand the cultural identity of their learners. For example, Indian learners who are talented in traditional modes of expression for a particular American Indian society, such as in the areas of art, dance, or even athletics, probably will be supported in the development of their talents by parents and relatives. Those students who come from families adhering to a conservatively traditional American Indian culture as a way of life, however, may experience difficulties if they attempt to express themselves more creatively than usual.

American Indian learners comprise one percent of the total student population in the United States. Unfortunately, these learners and the schools and teachers who serve them are almost never represented in sufficient numbers in national education studies to permit reliable and valid generalizations about their characteristics. Furthermore, because of factors such as

tribal and linguistic diversity, geographic dispersion, and preponderance in remote rural areas, most national studies have found it too costly to add supplemental samples to address issues of concern to American Indian and Alaska Native education. Pavel, Curtin, Christenson and Rudes (1995) provide current data from their 1990-91 *Characteristics of American Indian and Alaska Native Education* schools and staffing survey detailing information on schools, administrators, and teachers serving these learners that is both national in scope and comparable to data gathered concurrently on United States schools in general.

American Indians suffer from the highest unemployment rates and conditions of greatest poverty in the United States. Average family incomes may be as low as $900 per year, and unemployment rates can run as high as 90 percent. Many Native children in these communities develop a negative image of themselves and their societies--a view that is directly attached to their economic status (Szasz, 1992). Deaths related to alcoholism are four times higher for Indians than for the general populations; 70 percent of all treatments provided by physicians at Indian Health Service clinics are for alcohol-related disease or trauma. Alcohol plays a role in perhaps 90 percent of all homicides involving Indians and in most suicides and accidental-injury deaths (Unrau, 1996; Mancall,1995). American Indian and Alaska Natives are the most devastated group of adolescents in the United States. According to a recent study conducted by Blum, Harmon, Harris and Resnich (1992) at the University of Minnesota, nearly one in six Indian adolescents has attempted suicide--a rate four times that of other teen-agers. Indian young people are more likely to come from broken homes or abuse drugs, and 20 percent describe their health as poor. American Indian/Alaska Native adolescents reported high rates of health-compromising behaviors and risk factors related to unintentional injury, substance use, poor self-assessed health status, emotional distress, and suicide. In grades K-12, about 85

percent of Native students currently attend public schools, with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and private schools still enrolling significant numbers of students. Finally, American Indian and Alaska Native learners have the highest dropout rate of any racial or ethnic group in the United States, almost twice that of white learners (Johnson, Dupuis, Musial, Hall & Gollnick, 1996; Hillabrant, Romano, Stang & Charleston, 1992).

Hilliard (1989) contends that the lower level of achievement of minority learners is a function of systematic inequalities in schooling. These inequalities stem from misjudgments of students' intellectual capabilities. Teachers must abandon the deficit view of Indian learners that permeates educational thinking. Moreover, they must implement a challenging and rigorous curriculum, one that extends children's thinking beyond that which is known to them already. Delpit (1988) advocates the fostering of more meaningful interpersonal relations in schools, affirmation of the beliefs that all learners are capable of learning, the establishment of high academic standards for all learners, and the use of learners' communicative styles in teaching. Unfortunately, sometimes issues of power come into play in the classroom between the learner(s) and teacher. Delpit believes that academic success demands the acquisition of the mainstream culture, which means, in part, acquiring the communicative codes of those in power. Those who do not belong to the power group should be taught explicitly the means of access to power, including the linguistic forms, and ways of talking, writing and interacting used by the powerful. Equally important, the learners should be taught to value ethnic distinctions and be helped to learn that the culture of the group in power, while instrumental in our society, is not intrinsically superior to the cultures of the less powerful underrepresented groups. Teachers of Indian learners must also understand that cultural identity is a major issue in school.

Wilson (1992) argues that before one can address issues as tribal sovereignty retained by

various groups of American Indians, it is necessary to determine membership within Indian groups. This process hinges heavily on blood quantum, or the degree of Indian ancestry expressed in fractions such as one-fourth or three-eighths. Blood quanta are putatively tied to questions of culture and degrees of acculturation and assimilation. Those whose physical appearances render their Indian identities suspect are subject to suspicious scrutiny until precise cultural explanations, especially blood quantum, are offered or discovered.

Indian learners are often thought to have specific physical characteristics such as black hair and eyes, dark brown skin, and high cheekbones. Trimble (1981) indicates that for many, it is difficult to accept as an Indian an individual who has light hair, blue eyes, and fair skin. However, the reality is that Native people display a wide range of phenotypic characteristics in terms of body size, skin and hair color, and facial features. Conflicts in identity are often great for individuals who do not fit the traditional physical stereotypes. They may meet with prejudice and rejection from authentic, tribal Indians and non-Indians alike.

It's ironic that Indian people are not allowed to be experts on themselves, it's usually someone else "defining" the Indian. The process of defining and maintaining "self" is the challenge that American Indians have faced in all the political, economic, social, and cultural realities of the last two centuries. The continual process of self-knowledge, self-actualization, and self-worth is the foundation for many Indian people for cultural survival.

The tribe is of fundamental importance as it relates to cultural identity. For those Indians living on tribal reservations and for those living in urban areas, the relationship with their tribal affiliation is strong and very different from that between non-Indians. Indian people see themselves as an extension of their tribe(s). This tribal identity provides them with a sense of cultural belonging and family security. Social stratification and honors are obtained by

maintaining tribal norms and conformity. Many Indian people who leave the reservation to seek greater opportunities sacrifice cultural knowledge and tribal language. In the past, the tribe, through the extended family structure, was responsible for the full development and education of all the children.

American Indian Family Structure

Teachers need to examine the spectrum of American Indian family structure, whereby learning there is a wide range of degree of cultural assimilation and/or affirmation by Indian learners in American schools. This developmental process reflects the unique different orientations, beliefs and ideologies of the cultural evolution of American Indian families. A discussion of the spectrum of American Indian family systems examines permutations and combinations of behavior that emerge as revitalized cultural systems.

According to John Red Horse (1988), American Indian family structure can be categorized on a continuum that organizes family typology and explicates modal behaviors for individuals and groups within family types. The continuum of family typology includes traditional, neotraditional, transitional, bicultural, accultural, panrenaissance family types.

Traditional behavior derives from village structures that were common among tribal groups--residents were members of an extended kin system, villages were considered sacred societies, and elders assumed respected roles because their accumulated wisdom was necessary to interpret lives and relationships according to a sacred context. Neotraditional families emerge most commonly through mass religious conversions organizing into close kin and village structures and simply adopt new ritual procedures for sacred beliefs. Transitional families emerge through geographic relocation away from extended kin systems attempting to retain modal behaviors similar to traditional groups. Bicultural families make important shifts away

from traditional modal behaviors; do not transmit specific traditional knowledge across generations; parents often may understand their native language, but they do not maintain it in the home; and many have converted to non-Indian religions. Acculturated families are assimilated and represent the most extreme departure from traditional life-styles; English language is used by both parent and child generations; nuclear households are the preferred family structure; and peer relations generally are with non-Indians for both parents and children. Panrenaissance families emerge as important cultural revival responses when external forces place families and individuals in jeopardy, and the emergence of such families and groups is not unique to contemporary American Indians.

Modal behaviors common within family types include language of preference, religious beliefs, attitudes about land, kin system structure, and health behavior. The traditional American Indian family is the benchmark for any discussion of American Indian family types. The spectrum of types does not imply a linear phenomenon necessarily. In many instances, modal behaviors change for different situations, and families can move in either direction along the continuum.

The Indian family structure varies from tribe to tribe. Some generalizations can be made, however, for most tribes, the extended family is the basic model. Indian children are often raised by relatives (in which the majority cultures refers to) such as aunts, uncles, and grandparents who live in separate households. The concept of the extended family is often misunderstood by those not familiar with Indian cultures, especially those who operate under the concept of the nuclear family. The extended family structure often extends through the second cousin and sometimes adoptions outside the family. For Indian learners, it is not unusual to have youngsters stay in a variety of different homes. Teachers can make misinterpretations if they think that only

the parents should raise and be responsible for Indian children. Therefore, teachers of Indian learners should be cautious about the patterns of behavior as related to cultural context. Also, Indian values are similar yet different in many ways. Problem behaviors should be reviewed before a teacher addresses a disciplinary plan of action.

With the great diversity and variation among American Indian cultures, it is difficult to describe a set of values that encompasses them all. A few cultural values, however, can be generalized as follows: sharing, cooperation, noninterference, time orientation, extended family structure, and co-exist with nature. These cultural values can produce certain issues and problems, especially when Indian learner behaviors are interpreted from a non-Indian perspective.

Culturally responsive teachers focus on the strengths that exist in Indian families, while using culturally accepted group pedagogy to promote social cohesion. Tribal culture can be used to strengthen group ties. For many Indian students tribal identity is built through their participation in cultural activities such as intertribal pow-wows, feasts, special events at school, and cultural gatherings. In teaching American Indians, issues of Indian/White relationships may need to be explored; the individual's value structure be identified; and issues of culture conflict and identity should be investigated. Biracial and blended families may do well with traditional American methodology and pedagogy of teaching, however, traditional Native learners may first have to deal with issues of trust and may respond best to a combination of student-centered with behavioral approaches that are culturally responsive.

Historically, American Indians have had negative relationships with government agencies, and many Native people are likely to be realistically cautious with white authorities. The problems are vast and based on 500 years of mistreatment of Native peoples. This is

understandable considering the destruction of culture, language and human lives inflicted upon all Indian populations throughout U.S. history. Early educational history of American Indians is about how non-Indian policymakers sought to use the school-house--specifically the boarding schools--as an instrument for acculturating Indian youth to "American" ways of thinking and living (Adams, 1995). As a result of this experience, intergenerational distrust of non-Indians may be combined with anger and confusion. Indian peoples realize far better than the greater society the atrocities that have been committed against them. Even today, in government, education, films, sports competitions and society in general, Indian peoples are presented in a derogatory fashion (Roop, 1993).

The educational literature confirms that classroom life is complex and dynamic. One of the greatest complexities of teaching stems from the fact that teachers interact closely with large numbers of learners with different individual characteristics and from varied cultural backgrounds. To reach all the learners in a class, a teacher needs a wide repertoire of instructional strategies and must be skilled in selecting the strategies that are culturally responsive to the needs of the learners.

Culturally Responsive Teaching for Indian Learners

Culturally responsive teachers should be knowledgeable, sensitive, and comfortable in working with Indian learner's language, cultural code switching, style of presentation and tribal community values. Whether Indian learners come from reservation areas or urban settings, the element of obtaining "craft wisdom" is critical to maximizing learning for all learners. Obtaining craft wisdom many times takes years to acquire. Some teachers have almost a natural instinct in adapting and working successfully with diverse populations, while others may take a lifetime.

Craft wisdom comes from acquiring the element of being "street smart," "reservation

smart," and/or the ability to adapt to culturally diverse populations and geographical locations. It also brings together all the personal qualities of classroom leadership. Like "OJT" (on-the-job-training), classroom leadership is something to be learned over time, not simply by completing a teacher preparation program. Basic leadership is an art. It's more a weaving of relationships than an amassing of information, and in that sense encompasses all the elements of craft wisdom.

Tribal language is a very important support system for youth because it transmits culture. How the mind creates language may have much to do with culture. Many tribal languages are "Free-word-order" languages which allow phrase order to vary. For example Comanche words from different phrases can be scrambled together: *This man caught a fish* can be expressed as *Man this fish caught*, *Man fish caught this*, and any of the other four orders, all completely synonymous. For English or monolingual speakers this structure may be very different.

Pinker (1994) contends that English is an "isolating," "accusative," "subject-prominent" language, as well as a "fixed-word-order" language where each phrase has a fixed position. English is an "SVO" language, with the order subject-verb-object (*Dog bites man*). Japanese is subject-object-verb (SOV: *Dog man bites*); Modern Irish (Gaelic) is verb-subject-object (VSO: *Bites dog man*). And, of course, a glance at a grammar for any particular language will reveal dozens or hundreds of idiosyncrasies. In a pluralistic environment, ethnic language differences like Indian English are viewed as different from, but not lesser than, standard English. Language can have a profound effect on the psychological well-being and the academic achievement of Indian learners in a diverse society.

We can learn much from Canadian First Nations toward obtaining federal acknowledgment and recognition of Native languages in order to justify formalized development in higher education. For example teacher education needs to offer more intensive studies of

Native languages and reconstruct curriculum that will transcend other Native studies teaching levels. Unlike many other languages officially used in this country, Native languages have their roots and resources in the tribal communities.

According to Villegas (1991), a culturally responsive pedagogy builds on the premise that how people are expected to go about learning may differ across cultures. Cultural differences present both opportunities and challenges for teachers. To maximize learning opportunities, teachers must gain knowledge of the cultures represented in their classrooms, then translate this knowledge into instructional practice.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is a pertinent part of the multicultural educational reform that is taking place in American schools. Essentially, culturally responsive teaching is at the heart of all "good" teaching. It meets the needs of each individual in the classroom, and respects each not for the cultural diversity each brings to the classroom, but also for the expertise each brings to the classroom. To be culturally responsive, educational strategies require adaptation to local circumstances (Nelson-Barber & Meier, 1990; Cole & Griffin, 1987; Diaz, Moll & Mehan, 1986; Gallimore, 1985; Jordan, 1985). The teacher preparation curriculum that espouses a culturally responsive pedagogy (Pewewardy, 1994, 1999) for Indian children must address the following:

* require preservice teachers to gain classroom experience with Indian children before their student teaching internship.
* train teachers to understand and respect learner's cultural knowledge base.
* require preservice teachers to study the history and culture of Indian children including their values, stories, music and myths, as well as racism/sexism from both cognitive and affective worldviews.

* train teachers to be reflective practitioners and develop observational, empirical and analytical skills necessary to monitor, evaluate and revise continually their respective teaching styles.
* help teachers learn to acknowledge the cognitive-worldview of Indian children.
* teacher education must include Indian parents and respective communities in the decision-making process.
* teachers should understand the cultural code switching, dialect and/or Indian English of the learners.
* train teachers to understand learners interpersonal skills: body language, eye contact, silence, touch, public space, facial expression.
* teacher preparation must assist preservice and inservice teachers with their fear, apprehension, and overreaction related to Indian children's' styles of personal presentation.
* supervise student teachers' clinical experiences in strong support system schools.
* teachers should be aware of cultural differences when evaluating learners.

Although there are no universal characteristics that a teacher can study to understand American Indian learners, a few common behaviors and worldviews may seem to be demonstrated by many Indian children. It is very important that teachers prevent a tourist and/or suitcase approach to teaching Indian learners. These two approaches suggests a "culturally strip-mining" method to teaching. Therefore, to be proactive teachers of Indian learners need to be aware of the following:

* Indian learners should not be stereotyped or all placed in the same category.

In some cases, ethnic background is the only constant. Many Indian learners have middle-class backgrounds, therefore, they may demonstrate many of the same behaviors as other learners who hold middle-class values. The major difference is these learners may receive more peer pressure to "act Indian" than middle-class whites do to "act white."

* In social studies lessons Indian learners should not have to defend the Native perspective of the Bering Strait Theory in class or to their teachers. Also, it is important that teachers do not set up Indian learners for conflict by initiating immigration patterns to this country. Do not assume that Indian learners are well acquainted with their tribal heritage and culture, speak their tribal language, or affirm their Indian identity.
* Teachers should avoid "celebrate diversity" units whereby learners are asked to find out what countries their ancestors emigrated from.
* Teachers and/or substitutes should not call upon their Indian learners in class as "Indian boy" or "Indian girl."
* Learners should not be reprimanded publicly. If there is a need to reprimand a learner, it should be done in private. Even the most mild-mannered learners are likely to fight back when embarrassed in front of their classmates.
* Whenever possible, ignore foul language, especially if it occurs in jocular, good-natured ribbing sessions. These sessions are often an important rite of passage in Indian youth culture and critical to the development of peer and social relationships.
* A lack of family involvement should not be assumed to mean that the families

are not interested in the welfare of the learner. Many Indian families will not become involved in the school because they do not know what to do; they feel that they do not have the appropriate skills, they work several jobs, or they feel uncomfortable in the area of intervention or in the presence of what may be perceived as a white authority figure, especially in public schools.

* Teachers should not take everything personally. There are times when things will not proceed as planned. At times, teachers may feel that it is their fault that learners are demonstrating certain behaviors. In such cases, teachers feel that the negative behaviors are directed toward them, rather than the situation. Consequently, the relationship between the teacher and learner may begin to deteriorate. If it is allowed to continue, this relationship will most likely develop into a negative situation.

* Teachers should not try to take on the behaviors of the learners. It is important to understand the learners and make every attempt to help them. In other words, teachers must respect others if they are to be respected.

* Learners should not be corrected each time they use nonstandard English. The goal is to assist Indian learners in understanding that the usage of standard English is important if they wish to become successful in mainstream society.

* Teachers should be familiar with the different strategies to construct their narratives as topic-centered and/or topic-associating during "sharing time," a recurrent classroom event in which learners are expected to tell their classmates and teacher about some past experience. Most Indian learners favor "topic-associating," while White learners prefer "topic-centered" style--sociolinguistic

disparity prevents the White teacher from collaborating successfully with Indian learners during "sharing time."

The following principles are offered to guide culturally responsive teaching. Culturally and linguistically different students learn best when:

* teachers use learner's prior cultural knowledge as a foundation in the teaching and learning process.
* classroom practices are compatible with learner's linguistical language patterns, cognitive functioning, motivation, and the social norm and structures to which children are naturally accustomed.
* classroom instruction validates and affirms the culture and language that children bring into the classroom.
* assessment practice and procedures reflect the diversity of learner strengths and an appreciation for multiple intelligences.
* the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of the school model respect for cultural diversity, celebrate the contributions of diverse groups, and foster understanding and acceptance of racial and ethnic plurality.
* teachers value community language and knowledge, view learners as assets, and integrate them into classroom instruction.
* teachers act as mediators of knowledge, and provide assistance through the use of questions, feedback, and scaffolding.
* schooling provides children with the knowledge, language, and skills to function in the mainstream culture but not at the expense of losing their Native language and original cultural orientation.

* schooling helps children participate in multiple cultural or language domains (arenas) for different purposes without undermining their connection to their original culture.
* the community and the home validate and support the academic success of its children.

Sandhu and Rigney (1995) offer a three-step model consisting of specific behaviors teachers are advised to initiate at each step.

Step One: Awareness (Culturally Responsive Teachers)

* actively seek knowledge about other cultures and ethnic groups through all means available to them, including books, films, community resource people, etc.
* learn to create equitable learning conditions for students from diverse ethnic backgrounds by, among other methods, becoming aware of culturally specific learning styles, values, communication patterns, and behaviors.
* examine their own beliefs, values, and behaviors and how they might have positive or negative effects upon the culturally different/distinct learners.

Step Two: Acceptance (Culturally Responsive Teachers)

* accept the notion that cultural diversity is valuable and an asset.
* believe that all learners can learn and have the potential to excel in their areas of interest.
* respect divergent thinking and the different viewpoints of their learners.

Step Three: Action (Culturally Responsive Teachers)

* empower their learners through personal attention, encouragement, and support.

* practice behaviors that are free from prejudice, biases, and stereotypes, and encourage their learners to do so.
* are genuine, considerate, and empathetic with their students both in and outside the classroom.
* are committed to promoting cultural diversity and are open to new experiences and challenges.
* are committed to the development and teaching of didactic and experiential curriculum on cultural diversity.

To fully understand the condition of Indian education and therefore, Indian learners, a teacher can use humor as an intervention strategy in the teaching and learning process. Indian humor is an important aspect of psychological health and a unique aspect of group functioning. Humor is an elusive and multifaceted concept that includes wit, laughter, joking, comedy, kidding, teasing, crying, clowning, mimicking, satire and freak enjoyment of the imperfect (Robinson, 1978). To many Indian learners humor serves as nonverbal communication because it conveys messages, usually of an emotional nature, that might be censored if expressed or acknowledged directly. Humor also serves social, psychological and physiological functions for individuals. Among Indian cultures, humor traditionally has played an important role in both daily life and ceremonial activities (Herring, 1994). Making learning culturally congruent is being culturally responsive. Also framing a curriculum design from the medicine wheel embellishes a holistic approach to teaching Indian learners.

Identifying the basic components of self-esteem to be significance, competence, power, and virtue, Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bocken (1990) explain the power of the circle of courage to reclaim youth who have experienced the ecological hazards of destructive

relationships, climates of futility, learned irresponsibility, and loss of purpose commonly experienced in the American paradigm of public education. Traditional Native worldview nurtures "significance" in a cultural milieu that celebrates the universal needs for "belonging"; "competence" is insured by guaranteed opportunities for "mastery"; "power" is fostered by encouraged the expression of "independence"; and "virtue" is reflected in the pre-eminent value of "generosity."

Teachers can have a positive impact on the academic growth of Indian learners. To be successful, teachers need not be members of the learner's cultural group, although having similar cultural experiences often facilitates instruction (Villegas, 1991). Effective teachers of Indians learners, however, must be culturally responsive to the cultural characteristics of the learner, and have the pedagogical skills needed to accommodate these characteristics in the classroom.

Matching Teaching Styles with Learning Styles

To maximize learning for American Indian, many educational researchers suggest matching teaching styles with learning styles. Therefore, adjusting instructional materials and classroom procedures to the culture and learning styles of students enhances their ability to learn (Kleinfeld & Nelson, 1991; Swisher & Deyhle, 1989; Andera & Atwell, 1988; Gregorc, 1979). Moreover, the teaching style or method one chooses to transmit learning can have a significant effect on whether Indian students learn or fail (Swisher & Deyhle, 1992). Bennett (1985) encourages teachers to know their own teaching and learning styles and determine how far they can stray from these strengths and preferences and still be comfortable. She cautions teachers to build classroom flexibility slowly, adding one new strategy at a time--using all modes (visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic) when teaching concepts and skills are compatible.

Bland (1975) states that there is no one American Indian learning style. However,

Bland's research shows that to be compatible with the largest number of American Indian students' learning styles, instructors should consider the following recommendations:

* use an informal room design that allows varied seating patterns.
* motivate by providing frequent positive feedback and praise success.
* allow for pairs or small teams to work together. Plan many group projects rather than individual assignments.
* incorporate many manipulative activities that rely heavily on visual as well as tactile/kinesthetic senses.

The determination that an American Indian learning style exists may be harmful due to the danger of ethnic stereotyping. There is no *absolute* Indian learning style, however, a wide variety of individual differences have been identified. Teachers of Indian students have to look to learning styles research to help understand the impact of Native cultural values and socialization practices on the teaching and learning process. They should use a variety of teaching styles that appeal to diverse students. Concepts should be taught when possible with different strategies so that students who are relationship and/or analytic in their learning styles will have an equal opportunity to learn.

While there may be similarities across Native cultures, there are differences as well and teachers should not use their understanding of learning styles research as a stereotype or label to describe, but rather as a set of understandings that will transform pedagogy and embellish culturally responsive teaching. Finally, there is no way for any one teacher to know all of the cultural learning styles of their students that are coming into the classrooms. What teachers need, however, is the mindset and attitude to want to know their learning styles. That's being a culturally responsive teacher.

Multicultural Education: Some Principles and Issues

The basic elements of multicultural education came together by the early seventies; since then, its institutions and even its rhetoric ("multiculturalism," "affirmative action," "diversity") has been relatively stable. Lind (1995) asserts that Multicultural America is built on the repudiation of white supremacy in favor, not of color-blind liberalism, but of an elaborate system of racial preferences for citizens who are officially designed as nonwhite by government bureaucracies. These racial preferences in education, hiring, contracting, and political redistricting are available not only to descendants of the victims of American white supremacy, but also to recent immigrants from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and the North American Indian continent.

Efforts to characterize the United States as a "melting pot" was one of this country's earliest politically correct language inventions. I perceive multicultural education to be academically and culturally correct. Actually, it demands academic, clinical and scientific correctness. King and Wilson (1994) contend that as a European settler society, this nation-state was not founded on "multicultural" principles (as the mythology of "pluralism" maintains); it was founded on a romanticized notion of a "civilized" White Nation. We know how great a myth the "melting pot" turned out to be. But we should also be aware of how much did actually melt--being Irish-American or Italian-American is very different from being Irish or Italian. Moreover, in addition to American inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic group diversity, there are myriad differences associated with age, gender, economic status, regionalism, and human exceptionality of all sorts, to cite only a few. American society, then, is best characterized as a mosaic of an extensive, highly diverse array of cultural elements.

For teachers of American Indian learners it is important to be aware of one's own cultural

biases. This includes many Indian teachers who teach Indian learners because they are products of monocultural teacher preparation programs--much of what most teachers were taught before multicultural education was based on Western and Northern European values and influences. For example, many teachers still expect Indian learners to establish constant eye contact with them, to openly discuss inner feelings, to verbalize concerns outwardly, defend their answers, challenge their classmates, be aggressive in class, speak standard English, as well as participate fully in class. Because issues of trust have not been dealt with, many Indian learners often will not display their teachers' prescribed behaviors--much of which are based on white, middle-class norms. Ogbu (1992) notes that students from involuntary minority groups are torn between school expectations and the failures and frustrations of their community and personal affiliations.

> An involuntary minority student desiring and striving to do well in school is faced with the conflict between loyalty to the minority peer group, which provides a sense of community and security, and the desire to behave in ways that may improve school performance but that the peer group defines as "White." (Ogbu, 1992, p. 10)

For Indian learners, the feeling that they have to "act white" should not be a requirement for achieving their prescribed learner outcomes. Greenberg (1992) offers many ideas for teaching about American Indians. Perhaps her most profound suggestion is to "start making our classroom inclusive: abolish the rightness of whiteness assumption."

Many Indian learners firmly believe that teacher race *does* matter, and for reasons that include and extend beyond issues of cultural congruence in the classroom. Sleeter (1992) argues that white teachers bring to the teaching profession perspectives about what race means, which they construct mainly on the basis of their life experiences and vested interests. She contends that a predominantly white teaching force in a racist and multicultural society is not good for

anyone, if we wish to have schools reverse rather than reproduce racism. She sees that Whites tend to take over and as a whole--Whites do not talk about White racism.

Long before coming to school many White, middle-class children have learned to accept the authority of the teacher as that of an adult who commands respect, to speak only when given a turn, to be verbally expressive, to respond to display questions, to value individual competition, to use topic-centered narratives, and to think analytically. For these children the school experience is an extension of the home experience. Such is not the case for many Indian children for the culture of the classroom often clashes with that of the home and community. Unfortunately, teachers who lack intercultural communication training (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994) and culturally responsive teaching often view the response of Indian children to this unfamiliar cultural context as academic incompetence.

Speaking to predominantly White teachers at an inservice session, Sleeter (1994) suggests that Whites might address White racism asserting that "our Whiteness seemed to be invisible to us--we could discuss our religious, ethnic, and social class differences, but not our common Whiteness or the privileges we gain from White racism." Sleeter (1992) wrote "that what White people know about the social world is generally correct, but only for understanding White people" (p. 211). She referred to the perspective of most white teachers about race as "dysconscious racism," a term she borrowed from Joyce King. King (1991) wrote that

> Dysconscious racism is a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant white norms and privileges. It is not the absence of consciousness (that is, not unconsciousness) but an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to, for example, critical consciousness. (p. 135)

McIntosh (1989) affirms this view as she reflects that her schooling gave her no training

in seeing herself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. She contends that "whites are carefully taught *not* to recognize white privilege"; "I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was `meant' to remain oblivious." Also, Stavey (1989) asserts that she "was conditioned *not* to notice who *wasn't* there . . . . The people I knew didn't practice discrimination; none of us suspected we were co-operating with it. We were like first-class passengers on a ship; comfortable with our privileges. We didn't know--or perhaps want to know--what went on below the decks on which we danced."

Whites rarely connect ethnicity with social structures, such as neighborhood, friendship groups, occupation, or political organizations. Howard (1993) posits that the United States was never a white European Christian nation and is becoming less so every day. Most public school educators know the curriculum has to change to reflect this reality, but many guardians of the traditional canon still find it frightening to leave the Old World. There is a dire need to articulate clear self-interest arguments for whites combating racism. According to Terry (1975), Whites need to understand more sharply how racism destroys them as well as others in the society. The challenge today, therefore, is preparing monocultural teachers to teach American Indian learners. Monocultural schools may no longer be the locus of teacher placements (Aaronsohn, Carter, & Howell, 1994). The simple statements that all learners, regardless of their ethnic or racial backgrounds, should have the opportunity to learn about their own culture and the culture of others forms the basic tenet of multicultural education.

When Indian learners are confronted with predominant white, middle-class cultural norms and behavioral patterns within public schools, the result is usually "cultural discontinuity" or "lack of cultural synchronization" between learners and their school. When there is cultural

mismatch between learners and their school, Irvine (1990) contends that the inevitable occurs: miscommunication and confrontation among the learner, the teacher, and the home; hostility, alienation, diminished self-esteem and eventual school failure. Marginal tribal language and/or Indian studies programs will fail to attract Indian learners who have few tangible connections to tribal culture (Pewewardy & Willower, 1993).

As teachers examine their attitudes and beliefs, they should cautiously avoid either a guilt-reaction as in "We WASPs are immoral about minorities" or a defensive-posture as in "It's not my fault that millions of American Indians are no longer here as a result of a national holocaust framed from United States colonial policy." We must critically analyze the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny ideologies of this country and the meaning of progress and success. Therefore, teachers of Indian learners must ask themselves, "Who's progress?" And "Who's success?" During the pursuit of happiness of everyday life, it becomes a life-long learning journey to study reasons why there are "haves" and "haves nots" in our United States society. Guilt reactions and defensive postures block analytical thinking and impede resolutions to these inquiries. A multicultural education is, therefore, not only essential to the American Indian child, but just as essential to the child of the dominant society (Gilliland, 1992).

Finally, multicultural education is about respect for cultural differences in order to build bridges between the resources of the learner and the content to be learned. By grounding multicultural education in how children actually learn, we recognize that it is something that all teachers must do to be effective with all children. Effective education through culturally responsive teaching is a natural outgrowth of education that is multicultural.

Conclusion

Teachers in a multicultural society need to hold an attitude of respect for cultural

differences, know the cultural resources their students bring to class, and be skilled at tapping learners' cultural resources in the teaching-learning process. They must believe that all students are capable of learning, and they must implement an enriched curriculum for all students. Finally, they must have a strong sense of professional efficacy (Villegas, 1991).

It is important to avoid cultural stereotypes of what an Indian is like reflected by the mainstream society. Instead, it is critical to respond to the individual and identify and explore his or her values. Accordingly, teachers of Indian learners need a knowledge base to guide their assessment of contemporary American Indian behaviors. Their professional observations in such areas of behavior as potential neglect and abuse, for example, have considerable impact on the lives of Indian children.

American Indian children appear to perform well academically the first few years of school. Thereafter, at the fourth grade level, a pattern of academics, attendance decline and dropouts occurs. Y. Red Horse (1982) associates this decline due to the massive exposure to negative Indian stereotypes as the children begin to identify themselves as culturally "Indians." These negative views produce feelings of hopelessness and despair. The inability to complete a high school education perpetuates the cycle of poverty and lack of life chances and opportunities. Enhancing the self-concept of Indian learners is essential to the effective education of Indian learners. Helping learners recognize their heritage, giving them a sense of belonging, as well as a sense of their uniqueness as Indian, is equally essential.

For many teachers of Indian children, a major change in their behaviors, attitudes and values is required. Charleston (1994) asserts that "public schools need to teach the reasons for the hundreds of treaties and agreements between the various tribes and the United States, the thousands of acts of Congress, and the countless court cases that constitute the present complex

body of federal Indian law. All of our people need to learn that the tribes and Native nations of this land have Constitutionally-based government-to-government relationships with the federal government and that no other group of people in the United States has this special relationship. Non-Native people must learn to respect the fact that, as members of tribes, American Indians and Alaska Natives are different from all other citizens of the United States; they have dual citizenship: tribal and United States citizenship."

Culturally responsive supervisors do not approach their work empty headed. They begin, rather, with professional knowledge and skills that are grounded in an understanding of the classroom as an ecology of language, culture and thought (Bowers & Flinders, 1990). Following supervision is culturally responsive evaluation. Teachers should be aware of cultural differences when evaluating American Indian learners. The Coalition for Culturally Responsive Evaluation has been recently discussing the various evaluation methodologies used to evaluate minority focused programs. This need grew out of a concern that the perspectives of racial and ethnic minorities are often omitted as stakeholder participants in evaluation. Conventional theory and traditional program evaluation standards often omit the nuances of ideographic and phenotype attributes of people of color. Unless there is open acknowledgment that race, economic status, and culture do matter and that responding to them is not an option but a necessity, important factors of analysis may be lost. Respect for the cultural differences of students begins by acknowledging that there is no one correct or best way to learn, and that every child brings the culture of his or her own home and community to school.

An examination of the problems associated with designing, implementing, pluralizing and evaluating an educational curriculum that is culturally responsive for Indian learners cannot but spark heated discussion and provide a first hand view of the obstacles to educational reform.

But only when values, ideologies, and culture are penetrated can reform begin. In the reformed public schools, Indian learners have the opportunity to learn together and develop socially, culturally, and academically. The isolation of Indian learners must end. Since most Indian children attend American public schools, it seems to remain that education will continue the method of socializing children into a society, therefore, we are in dire need to socialize our children for effective living in the 21st century--transforming the transracial American nation even as it transforms and absorbs them. Continued change and development for teaching American Indian learners will require a broader perspective. That means Indian Native children (like all children) must see themselves as contributing to the entire human project--participants, rather than spectators. All resources must be incorporated into a systematic regional approach to teaching Indian learners. The sustaining of a social and cultural impetus for the education of our children must come from the theorists, activists, practitioners, and the parents. If Indian learners are to be prepared for the future then we must take advantage of the lessons of the past, workings of the present-day, and preparation of tomorrow's culturally responsive teachers.

Notes

[1]The term, "Indian," "Native," Native Peoples," and "Native American" is used many time referring to the same population. However, I have found that "American Indian and Alaska Native" is the preferred term because of its precise reference to Indian groups in this country and the confusion over someone misidentifying themselves in the U.S. census count.

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